

negligence in a teacher if he does not avail himself of the aids which these societies offer. But we can expect little improvement in the system, until both the teacher and the public feel the necessity of blending literature and science and of regarding the peculiarities of mind which may distinguish individuals. It is seldom that the faculties of mind are uniformly developed; and although it may be necessary to correct the inordinate passion which is sometimes indulged for a particular pursuit, yet it is evident that to repress it altogether would be to destroy the energy of a mind, and to create a disgust for learning itself. Scientific knowledge is at least as important as ancient literature, but we should as much regret an exclusive attention to it in our schools, as we do the system now adopted of only teaching the classical languages. All minds are not equally suited for the same pursuit; and unless some circumstance in after life should rouse to activity in that department of knowledge for which the individual is by nature adapted, the energies of his mind must be irretrievably lost to society.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE EARTH IN RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE.

No science can be perfectly understood by a person who has confined his attention to the facts it teaches, for philosophy may be compared to a golden chain, which men are compelled to examine link by link, unable at once to perceive the connexion which exists between its parts. So, if we attempt to explain the phenomena we witness upon the earth's surface, without previously acquainting ourselves with the conditions of the body, and the relation it bears to those bodies by which it is surrounded, we shall always be sensible of the incompleteness of our knowledge, and may, in many instances, be led into error. All the causes acting upon the surface of the earth may be in themselves suited to sustain and nourish the creatures by which it is inhabited; but the relation it bears to other bodies may, for aught the mass of mankind know